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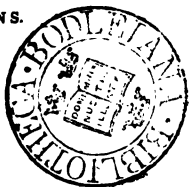
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*BEAUTIFUL BOUQUETS,
CULLED FROM THE POETS OF ALL COUNTRIES.*

THE HOLLY
AND
MISTLETOE.

Fifty Coloured Illustrations
FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS.



LONDON:
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.
BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
NEW YORK: SCRIBNER, WELFORD AND CO.
1869.

280. m. 381.

LONDON :
SAVILL, EDWARDS AND CO., CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.



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THE
HOLLY AND MISTLETOE.

THE HOLLY TREE.



HAST thou ever stood to see,
The Holly Tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves
Ordered by an intelligence so wise
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below a circling fence its leaves are seen,
Wrinkled and keen :
No grazing cattle thro' their prickly round
Can reach, to wound,
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize;
And in the wisdom of the Holly Tree
Can emblems see
Wherewith, perchance, to make a pleasant rhyme,
Such as may profit in the aftertime.

So, though abroad perchance I might appear
Harsh and austere;
To those who on my leisure would intrude,
Reserved and rude,
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And should my youth, as youth is apt I know,
Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
Would wear away;
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And as when all the summer trees are seen
So bright and green,
The holly leaves their fadeless hues display
Less bright than they;
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly Tree?

The Holly Tree.

3

As serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng,
So would I seem among the young and gay
More grave than they,—
That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.

SOUTHEY.



LINES BY GOETHE.

A LONGING long unfelt, a deep drawn sighing
For the far Spirit-world o'erpowers me now ;
My song's faint voice sinks fainter, like the dying
Tones of the wind-harp swinging from the bough ;
And my changed heart throbs warm,—no more denying
Tears to my eyes or sadness to my brow.
The Near afar off seems, the Distant—nigh,
The Now—a dream, the Past—reality.

Translated by HALLECK.





HOLLY BERRIES.

HOLLY berries, holly berries,
Red and bright and beaming,
Through the dusky evergreens
Like sprays of coral gleaming ;
Ye have power to fill the heart
With memories of glee :
Oh, what happy thoughts can cling
Round the holly tree !

When I see the holly berries,
I can think I hear
Merry chimes and carols sweet
Ringing in my ear.
Christmas, with its blazing fires
And happy hearths I see :
Oh, what merry thoughts can cling
Round the holly tree !

Bring the glowing holly berries ;
Snow is lying deep ;
All the gay and blooming flowers
Till the spring-time sleep.

Let them grace our happy homes
With their crimson light,
Mingling with the sombre fir,
And the laurel bright.

Keenly blows the icy wind,
Shorter grows the day,
Winter scatters cold and gloom
In his dreary play.
Yet we love the closing years
For the joy they bring,
And the holy memories
That round the holly cling.

Holly berries, holly berries,
Red and bright and beaming,
Through the dusky evergreens
Like sprays of coral gleaming;
Ye have power to fill the heart
With memories of glee:
Oh, what happy thoughts can cling
Round the holly tree!

C. M. P.



CHRISTMAS HYMN.



ALM on the listening ear of night
Come heaven's melodious strains,
Where wild Judea stretches far
Her silver-mantled plains.

Celestial choirs from courts above
Shed sacred glories there ;
And angels with their sparkling harps
Make music on the air.

The answering hills of Palestine
Send back a glad reply ;
And greet, from all their holy heights,
The Dayspring from on high.

On the blue depths of Galilee
There comes a holier calm,
And Sharon waves in solemn praise
Her silent groves of palm.

Christmas Hymn.

7

Glory to God! the sounding skies
Loud with their anthems ring
Peace to the earth—good will to men
From heaven's Eternal King!

Light on thy hills, Jerusalem!
The Saviour now is born!
And bright on Bethlehem's joyous plains
Breaks the first Christmas morn.

E. H. SEARS.



WINTER.

DREARY old Winter! weary old Winter !
Snow-blanch'd carl, all dripping and chill ;
Ice chains have bound thee, winds whistle round
thee,

Heavily, gloomily, plodding on still.
Yet when we meet thee, kindly we greet thee—
Sit by thy hearth blaze and melt all thy snow ;
With wassail and gladness we'll charm all thy sadness,
Make thy eye brighten, thy icy blood glow.
Dreary old Winter! weary old Winter !
We'll make thy eye brighten, thy icy blood glow.

Cheery old Winter! merry old Winter !
Laugh, while with yule-wreath thy temples are bound ;
Drain the spiced bowl now, cheer thy old soul now,
"Christmas *waes hael* !" pledge the holy toast round.
Broach butt and barrel ; with dance and with carol
Crown we old Winter of revels the king ;
And when he is weary of living so merry,
He'll lie down and die on the green lap of Spring.
Cheery old Winter! merry old Winter !
He'll lie down and die on the green lap of Spring.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.



WHO IS ALONE?

"He setteth the solitary in families."—PSALMS.



OW heavily the path of life
Is trod by him who walks alone;
Who hears not, on his dreary way,
Affection's sweet and cheering tone;
Alone, although his heart should bound
With love to all things great and fair,
They love not him,—there is not one
His sorrow or his joy to share.

The ancient stars look coldly down
On man, the creature of a day;
They lived before him, and live on
Till his remembrance pass away.
The mountain lifts its hoary head,
Nor to his homage deigns reply;
The stormy billows bear him forth,
Regardless which—to live or die.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

The floweret blooms unseen by him,
Unmindful of his warmest praise ;
And if it fades, seeks not his hand
Its drooping loveliness to raise.
The brute creation own his power,
And grateful serve him, tho' in fear ;
Yet cannot sympathize with man,
For if he weeps, they shed no tear.

Alone,—though in the busy town,
Where hundreds hurry to and fro—
If there is none who for his sake
A selfish pleasure would forego ;
And O how lonely among those
Who have not skill to read his heart,
When first he learns how summer friends
At sight of wintry storms depart.

My Saviour ! and didst Thou too feel
How sad it is to be alone,
Deserted in the adverse hour
By those who most Thy love had known ?
The gloomy path, though distant, still
Was ever present to Thy view ;
O how couldst Thou, foreseeing it,
For us that painful course pursue ?

Gems of Sacred Poetry.

IN THE SILENT MIDNIGHT WATCHES.

IN the silent midnight watches,
List!—thy bosom-door !
How it knocketh, knocketh, knocketh,
Knocketh evermore !
Say not, 'tis thy pulse's beating ;
'Tis thy heart of sin.
'Tis thy Saviour knocks, and crieth :
“ Rise, and let me in !”

Death comes down with reckless footstep,
To the hall and hut ;
Think you death will stand a-knocking
Where the door is shut ?
Jesus waiteth, waiteth, waiteth ;
But thy door is fast !
Grieved, away the Saviour goeth :
Death breaks in at last.

Then 'tis thine to stand—entreating
Christ to let thee in,
At the gate of Heaven beating,
Wailing for thy sin.
Nay, alas ! thou foolish virgin,
Hast thou then forgot
Jesus waited long to know thee ?
But He knows thee not !

A. C. COXE.



AWAKE.

WE are as barks floating upon the sea,
Helmless and oarless, when the light has fled
The spirit, whose strong influence can free
The drowsy soul that slumbers in the dead
Cold night of mortal darkness ; from the bed
Of sloth he rouses at her sacred call,
And, kindling in the blaze around him shed,
Rends with strong effort sin's debasing thrall,
And gives to God his strength, his heart, his mind,
his all.

Our home is not on earth ; although we sleep,
And sink in seeming death a while, yet then
The awakening voice speaks loudly, and we leap
To life, to energy, and light again
We cannot slumber always in the den
Of sense and selfishness ; the day will break—
Ere we for ever leave the haunts of men,
E'en at the parting hour the soul will wake,
Nor, like a senseless brute, its unknown journey take.
J. G. PERCIVAL.

THOUGHTS IN RHYME.

INWARD GRATITUDE.

As few the gleams that here and there betray
The secret streamlet on its leaf-clad way,
So faintest hints and tokens may express
Hearts poor in thanks, but rich in thankfulness.

DELOS.

Is life a sea? O no, 'tis steadier far.
Is life a land? O no, too fast 'tis driven.
It is beneath its guiding heavenly star,
An island floating toward the coast of heaven.

SMOKE AND CLOUD.

More dear the smoke that marks the shepherd's roof
Than gorgeous worlds of cloud from man aloof

SIN AND REASON.

All sins must needs in man's own choice begin;
So pray believe that Reason is not sin.

PEARLS AND BUBBLES.

Pearls ne'er like bubbles o'er the surface drive,
And who would search for them must learn to dive.



FAITH—KNOWLEDGE OF PEACE.



MET a reverend good old man,

Whom when for Peace

I did demand, he thus began :—

“There was a Prince of old

At Salem dwelt, who lived with good increase

Of flock and fold.

“He sweetly lived ; yet sweetness did not save
His life from foes.

But after death, out of his grave

There sprang twelve stalks of wheat,

Which many wondering at, got some of these

To plant and set.

“It prospered strangely, and did soon disperse
Through all the earth,

For they that taste it do rehearse,

That virtues lie therein—

A secret virtue bringing peace and mirth

By flight of sin.

“Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,
And grows for you;
Make bread of it; and that repose
And peace which everywhere
With so much earnestness thou dost pursue,
Is only there.”

HERBERT.



AWAKE.

OH, Thou! who in the garden's shade
Didst wake Thy weary ones again,
Who slumber'd in that fearful hour,
Forgetful of Thy pain.
Bend o'er us now, as over them,
And set our sleep-bound spirits free,
Nor leave us slumbering on the watch
Our souls should keep with Thee!

J. E. WHITTIER.





HUMAN LIFE.

"In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down and withered."—PSALM xc. 6.



WALK'D the fields at morning's prime,
The grass was ripe for mowing ;
The skylark sang his matin chime,
And all was brightly glowing.

"And thus," I cried, "the ardent Boy,
His pulse with rapture beating,
Deems Life's inheritance is joy,—
The future proudly greeting."

I wandered forth at noon :—alas !
On earth's maternal bosom
The scythe had left the withering grass,
And stretched the faded blossom.

And thus, I thought with many a sigh,
The hopes we fondly cherish,
Like flowers which blossom but to die,
Seem only born to perish.

Once more, at eve, abroad I strayed,
Through lovely hayfields, musing ;
While every breeze that round me played
Rich fragrance was diffusing.

The perfumed air, the hush of eve,
To purer hopes appealing,
O'er thoughts perchance too prone to grieve,
Scatter'd the balm of healing.

For thus " the actions of the just,"
When memory hath enshrined them,
E'en from the dark and silent dust
Their odour leave behind them.

BERNARD BARTON.

A POSY.

I MADE a posy, while the day ran by;
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band.
But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And wither in my hand.

HERBERT.



THE DEAD FLOWER.

I WALKED the other day (to spend my hour)
Into a field,
Where I sometimes had seen the soil to yield
A gallant flowre;
But winter now had ruffled all the bowre
And curious store
I knew there heretofore.

Yet I, whose search loved not to peep and peer
In th' face of things,
Thought with myself, there might be other Springs
Besides this here,
Which, like cold friends, sees us but once a year;
And so the flowre
Might have some other bowre.

Then taking up what I could nearest spie,
I digged about
That place where I had seen him to grow out,
And by the bye
I saw the warm Recluse alone to lie .
Where, fresh and green,
He lived, of us unseen.

Many a question intricate and rare
Did I there strow,
But all I could extort was, that he now
Did there repair
Such losses as befel him in this air ;
And would, ere long,
Come forth most fair and young.

This past, I threw the clothes quite o'er his head,
And stung with fear
Of my own frailty, dropt down many a tear
Upon his bed :
Then sighing whispered,—“ *Happy are the dead :*
What peace doth now
Rock him asleep below !”

And yet how few believe such doctrine springs
From a poor root,
Which all the winter sleeps here underfoot,
And hath no wings
To raise it to the truth and light of things,
But is still trod
By every wandering clod.

O Thou, whose Spirit did at first inflame
And warm the dead,
And by a sacred incubation fed
With life this frame,
Which once had neither being, forme, nor name !
Grant I may so
Thy steps track here below,

The Holly and Mistletoe.

That in the masques and shadows I may see
Thy sacred way,
And by those hid ascents climb to that day
Which breaks from 'Thee,
Who art in all things, though invisibly.
Show me thy peace,
Thy mercy, love, and ease.

And from this care, where dreams and sorrow reign,
Lead me above,
Where light, joy, leisure, and true comforts move,
Without all pain :
'There, hid in 'Thee, show me his life againe
At whose dumbe urne
Thus all the year I mourn !

H. VAUGHAN.





FAITH'S GUIDING STAR.



We find a glory in the flowers,
When snowdrops peep and hawthorn blooms.
We see fresh light in spring-time hours,
And bless the radiance that illumines.
The song of promise cheers with hope,
That sin or sorrow cannot mar ;
God's beauty fills the daisied slope,
And keeps undimm'd faith's guiding star.

We find a glory in the smile
That lives in childhood's happy face,
Ere fearful doubt or worldly guile
Has swept away the angel trace.
The ray of promise shineth there,
To tell of better lands afar ;
God sends his image, pure and fair,
To keep undimm'd faith's guiding star.

We find a glory in the zeal
Of doating breast and toiling brain ;
Affection's martyrs still will kneel,
And song, though famished, pour its strain.
They lure us by a quenchless light,
And point where joy is holier far ;
They shed God's spirit, warm and bright,
And keep undimm'd faith's guiding star.

We muse beside the rolling waves ;
We ponder on the grassy hill ;
We linger by the new-piled graves,
And find that star is shining still.
God in his great design hath spread
Unnumber'd rays to lead afar ;
They beam the brightest o'er the dead,
And keep undimm'd faith's guiding star.

ELIZA COOK.





LET ME REST

HE does well who does his best :
Is he weary ? let him rest :
Brothers ! I have done my best,
I am weary—let me rest.
After toiling oft in vain,
Baffled, yet to struggle fain ;
After toiling long, to gain
Little good with mickle pain ;
Let me rest.—But lay me low,`
Where the hedgeside roses blow ;
Where the little daisies grow,
When the winds a-maying go ;
Where the footpath rustics plod ;
Where the breeze-bow'd poplars nod ;
Where the old woods worship God ;
Where His pencil paints the sod ;
Where the wedded throstle sings ;
Where the young bird tries his wings ;
Where the wailing plover swings

The Holly and Mistletoe.

Near the runlet's rushy springs!
Where, at times, the tempest's roar,
Shaking distant sea and shore,
She will rove old Barnesdale o'er,
To be heard by me no more!
There, beneath the breezy west,
Tired and thankful, let me rest,
Like a child, that sleepeth best
On its gentle mother's breast.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

**LIFE THROUGH DEATH.**

A DEWDROP falling on the wild sea-wave,
Exclaimed in fear—"I perish in this grave;"
But in a shell received, that drop of dew
Unto a pearl of marvellous beauty grew;
And, happy now, the grace did magnify
Which thrust it forth—as it had feared, to die;
Until again, "I perish quite," it said,
Torn by rude diver from its ocean bed:
O unbelieving!—so it came to gleam
Chief jewel in a monarch's diadem.

R. C. TRENCH.



MISTLETOE BOUGH.

HAIL! hail to its leaves of rich green !
With pearls that are fit for a queen,
So pure and so white;
Such emblems of innocent mirth
We'll value as blessings on earth,
In this season of joy giving birth
To social delight.

May we like the mistletoe shed
A halo of joy o'er each head,
Wherever we go ;
In seasons of mirth may we reign
All joyous, and never give pain ;
Our song will not then be in vain
To the famed mistletoe.

E. T. WATTS.

THE IVY.

DOST thou not love, in the season of spring,
To twine thee a flowery wreath,
And to see the beautiful birch-tree fling
Its shade on the grass beneath?
Its glossy leaf, and its silvery stem;
Oh! dost thou not love to look on them?

And dost thou not love when leaves are greenest,
And summer has just begun,
When in the silence of moonlight thou leanest
Where glist'ning waters run,
To see by that gentle and peaceful beam,
The willow bend down to the sparkling stream?

And oh! in a lovely autumnal day,
When leaves are changing before thee,
Do not nature's charms as they slowly decay,
Shed their own mild influence o'er thee?
And hast thou not felt as thou stood'st to gaze,
The touching lesson such scene displays?

It should be thus, at an age like thine;
And it has been thus with me;
When the freshness of feeling and heart were mine
As they never more can be;

Yet think not I ask thee to pity my lot,
Perhaps I see beauty where thou dost not.

Hast thou seen in winter's stormiest day,
The trunk of a blighted oak,
Not dead, but sinking in slow decay,
Beneath time's resistless stroke,
Round which a luxuriant Ivy had grown,
And wreath'd it with verdure no longer its own?

Perchance thou hast seen this sight, and then,
As I, at thy years might do,
Pass'd carelessly by, nor turn'd again
That scathed wreck to view;
But now I can draw, from that mould'ring tree,
Thoughts which are soothing and dear to me.

O smile not! nor think it a worthless thing,
If it be with instruction fraught;
That which will closest and longest cling,
Is alone worth a serious thought!
Should aught be unlovely which thus can shed
Grace on the dying, and leaves not the dead?

Now in thy youth, beseech of Him
Who giveth, upbraiding not,
That His light in thy heart become not dim,
And his love be unforgot;
And thy God, in the darkest of days, will be
Greenness, and beauty, and strength to thee!

B. BARTON.



EMPLOYMENT.

IF as a flower doth spread and die,
Thou would'st extend me to some good,
Before I were by frost's extremity
Nipt in the bud ;

The sweetness and the praise were Thine:
But the extension and the room
Which in thy garland I should fill, were mine,
At Thy great doom.

For as Thou dost impart Thy grace,
The greater shall our glory be.
The measure of our joys is in this place,
The stuff with Thee.

Let me not languish, then, and spend
A life as barren to Thy praise,
As is the dust to which that life doth tend,
But with delays.

All things are busy ; only I
Neither bring honey with the bees,
Nor flowers to make that, nor the husbandry
To water these.

I am no link of Thy great chain,
But all my company is as a weed.
Lord ! place me in Thy concert ; give *one* strain
To my poor reed.

GEORGE HERBERT.



WINTER'S ROSE.

How sweet when around us affliction's dark power
Eclipses the sunbeams of life's glowing hour,
When drooping, dejected, in sorrow we bend,
Is the constant adherence of one faithful friend !
The crowds whom we smiled with when gladness was
ours,
Are summer's bright blossoms, and autumn's gay flowers !
But the friend in whose breast we in sorrow repose,
That friend is the winter's lone beautiful rose.

MRS. OPIE.



THE NATIVITY.

THEE, a soft and naked Child,
Thy mother undefiled
In the rude manger laid to rest
From off her virgin breast.

The heavens were not commanded to prepare
A gorgeous canopy of golden air;
Nor stoop'd their lamps th' enthronéd fires on high.
A single silent star
Came wandering from afar,
Gliding uncheck'd and calm along the liquid sky,
The Eastern sages leading on,
As at a kingly throne
To lay their gold and odours sweet
Before Thy infant feet.

DEAN MILMAN.



EDEN-LAND.



YOU remember where in starlight
We two wandered hand in hand ?
While the night-flowers poured their perfume
Forth like love o'er all the land :—
There I, walking yester-even,
Felt like a ghost from Eden-land !

I remember all you told me—
Looking up as we did stand,
While my heart poured out its perfume
Like the night-flowers in your hand,
And the path where we two wandered
Seemed not like earth, but Eden-land.

Now the stars shine paler, colder,
Night-flowers fade without your hand :
Yet my spirit walks beside you
Everywhere, in every land :
And I wait till we shall wander
Under the stars of Eden-land.

SWEDISH SONG.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

THE LOTUS.

O THOU of dark forebodings drear,
O thou of such a faithless heart,
Hast thou forgotten what thou art,
That thou hast ventured so to fear?

No weed on ocean's bosom cast,
Borne by its never-resting foam.
This way and that, without a home,
Till flung on some bleak shore at last—

But thou, the Lotus, which above
Swayed here and there by wind and tide,
Yet still below doth fixed abide,
Fast rooted in the eternal Love.

R. C. TRENCH.

THE CLOUDS.

THE mistie cloudes that fall sometime
And overcast the skies,
Are like to troubles of our time,
Which do but dimme our eies.
But as such dews are dried up quite,
When Phebus shewes his face.
So are sad fancies put to flight
When God doth guide by grace.

G. GASCOIGNE.

STORM AND CALM.

I NEVER watched upon a wilder night—
The maddened hurricane swept fiercely by,
And shook his sounding wings.—Impatiently,
As wrathful men in anguish, for his flight
The tossing trees bowed down their heads of might,
To the rude war of earth, and sea, and sky ;
I scarce could close at last my weary eye :—
Again I look before the morning light,
And all is changed.—In softest lullabies
The breeze but whispers ; o'er the countless ranks
Of Heaven's great host the mildest moonlight lies,
Like some broad stream fast sleeping in its banks.
The deep calm spake of rest in Paradise ;
I thought upon my dead—and gave God thanks.

S. WILBERFORCE.



SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough ;
Sing on, sweet bird ; I listen to thy strain.
See, aged winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrowed brow.
So in lone poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek content, with light, unanxious heart ;
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

BURNS.



THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.



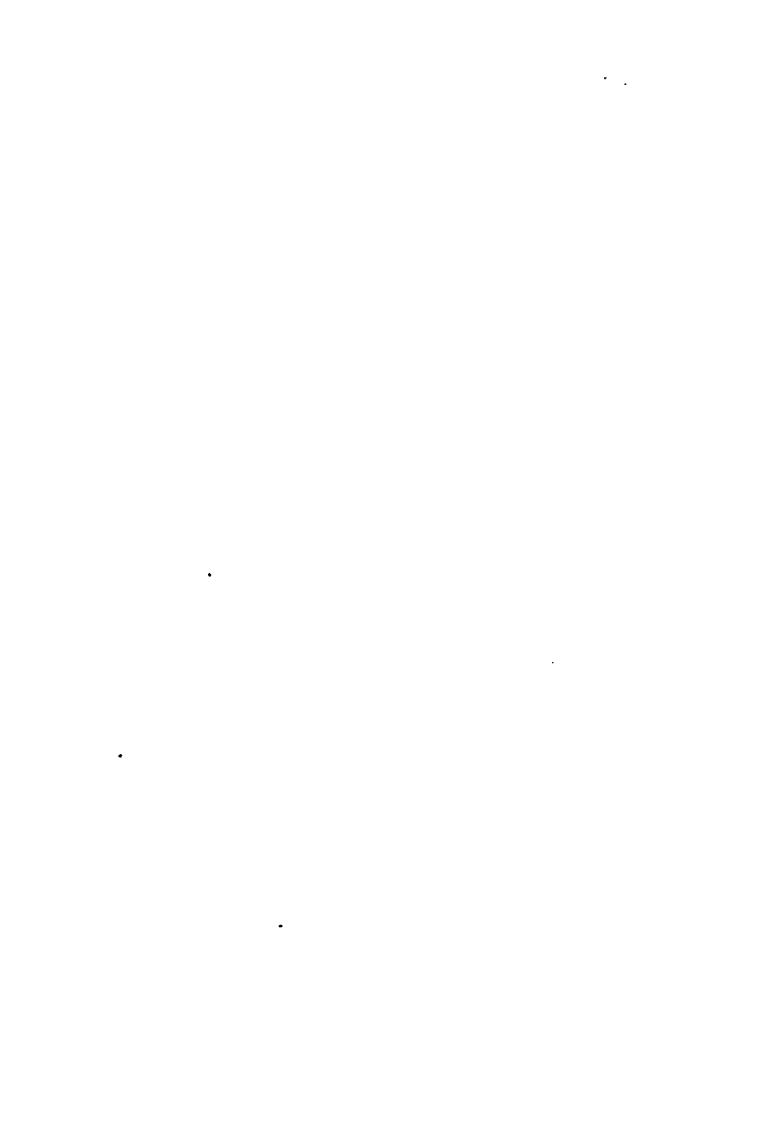
LOOK out in the winter time,
When other flowers are dead,
The white hail and the bitter wind
Beat on my lowly head ;
But God forbids the angry storm
My hardy bloom to kill,
And I am with my lot content,
Although it is so chill.

For oftentimes doth glittering frost
The sere trees hang with gems,
And thick snow crowns the evergreens
With stainless diadems ;
There's something in the wildest days,
Of hope and beauty still,
That makes me with my lot content,
Although it is so chill.

I dreamed once of a golden noon,
When every bough was clad
With young green leaves, and every bank
With rainbow blossoms glad.



CHAMAENEA



I waked, and feared its fiery sun
My humble bloom might kill,
And thought upon my lot content,
Although it is so chill.

Let other flowers know brighter skies,
And gay companions see,
While I live lonely—save at eve
When soft winds sing to me.
Their Father is my Father too,
He framed us at His will:
So I am with my lot content,
Although it is so chill.





DISCIPLINE.



WITHIN this leaf, to every eye
So little worth, doth hidden lie
Most rare and subtle fragrancý :

Wouldst thou its secret strength unbind ?
Crush it, and thou shalt perfume find
Sweet as Arabia's spicy wind.

In this dull stone, so poor, and bare
Of shape or lustre, patient care
Will find for thee a jewel rare :

But first must skilful hands essay
With file and flint to clear away
The film which hides its fire from day.

This leaf,—this stone,—it is thy heart :
It must be crushed by pain and smart,
It must be cleansed by sorrow's art—

Ere it will yield a fragrance sweet,
Ere it will shine, a jewel meet
To lay before thy dear Lord's feet.

S. WILBERFORCE.



CHRISTMAS EVE AND MORN.

BALE shone the moonlight,
White lay the snow,
Which like a winding-sheet
Wrapped all below :
Sharp blew the night breeze chill
Over the frozen rill,
Sweeping the wintry hill,
Where an old watch-tower
Gleamed through the snow.

There, in the moonlight,
There, in the snow,
Stood a lone watcher
Gazing below :
Feeble his form and frail,
Wasted his cheek and pale,
Swept by the midnight gale,
Still stood he watching—
Watching the snow.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

What said the moonlight?
What said the snow?
What said the night-breeze
Sweeping below?
Hark, how their voices clear
Fell on his list'ning ear,
As, full of doubt and fear,
Still stood he watching—
Watching the snow.

Murmured the moonlight,
Answered the snow,
Echoed the night-breeze,
“Long, long ago!
Long since thy blessed youth,
Open to right and ruth,
Full of all love and truth,
Shone forth as stainless,—
Pure as the snow.

“Oft has the moonlight
Shone on the snow;
Oft has the night breeze
Swept to and fro:
Since at life's starting-place,
Clad in each youthful grace,
Bravely to run thy race,
Thou didst stand stainless—
Pure as the snow.

“ Now, in the moonlight,
Now, in the snow,
Sadly thou watchest—
Heart full of woe.
Vainly, with aching brain,
Striving to find again,
Hopes long since lost or slain—
Pale as the moonlight,
Cold as the snow.

“ Tears in the moonlight
Fall on the snow ;
Sighs with the night wind
Steal to and fro :
And thy heart cries in vain,
‘ Come, O my youth ! again,
Free from all soil and stain,
Pure as the moonlight,
White as the snow.’ ”

So said the moonlight,
Answered the snow,
Echoed the night-breeze,
“ Long, long ago ! ”
Till in the eastern sky
Glowed a faint roseate dye,
Telling the day-dawn nigh,
Chasing the moonlight,
Tinging the snow.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

Then, in the twilight
Swept o'er the snow,
Borne by the night-breeze,
Sounds sweet and low ;
Hark how the music swells !
Music of matin bells,
Music of *Christmas* bells
Sounding forth sweetly
Over the snow.

What said the day-dawn,
What said the snow,
What said those sweet bells
Solemnly,—slow ?
“ Weep not thy wasted years,
Cast off thy griefs and fears,
Lo ! to thy help appears,
One who is spotless,
Purer than snow !”

Then as the day-dawn
Brightened the snow,
Kneft that lone watcher
Murmuring low :
“ No more in grief and pain,
Seek I my youth in vain,
In Christ I live again,
Henceforth for ever,
Whiter than snow.”

—*Churchman's Family Magazine.*



THE FLOWER.

IOW fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns ! ev'n as the flowers in spring
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring :
Grief melts away,
Like snow in May ;
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivell'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness ? It was gone
Quite underground : as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown ;
Where they together,
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

These are thy wonders, Lord of power !
Killing and quick'ning ; bringing down to hell,
And up to heaven in an hour ;
Making a *chiming*—of a *passing*-bell.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

We say amiss,
This or that is,
Thy word is all, if we could spell.

O that I once past changing were,
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither !
Many a spring I shoot up fair,
Offering at Heaven, growing and groaning thither :
Nor doth my flower
Want a spring shower,
My sins and I joining together.

But while I grow in a straight line,
Still upwards bent, as if Heaven were mine own,
Thy anger comes, and I decline.
What frost to that ? What pole is not the zone
Where all things burn,
When Thou dost turn,
And the least frown of thine is shown ?

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write,
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing. O my only light,
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night !

These are thy wonders, Lord of love !
To make us see we are but flowers that glide ;
Which when we once can find and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us where to bide.
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

GEORGE HERBERT.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES.

THERE are sounding in this heart,
Old chords still true to thee,
We are far—yet not apart,
Thou'rt gone—but not from me.

* * * * *

Not in anguish unavailing
Let me sink, while I can raise
The wounded or the failing,
To the hope of other days.

Let me still the widow's weeping,
Let me lift the orphan's head ;
A tireless vigil keeping
In memory of my dead.

ELEANORA T. HERVEY (*Chambers*).



LITTLE THINGS



TRAVELLER through a dusty road
Strew'd acorns on the lea ;
And one took root, and sprouted up
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time
To breathe its early vows ;
And age was pleased, in heats of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore ;
It stood a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern,
A passing stranger scoop'd a well
Where weary men might turn ;
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle at the brink,—
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that toil might drink.

He passed again,—and lo ! the well,
By summers never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues,
And saved a life beside.

A dreamer dropp'd a random thought :
 'Twas old and yet was new—
A simple fancy of the brain,
 But strong in being true ;
It shone upon a genial mind,
 And lo, its light became
A lamp of life, a beacon ray,
 A monitory flame.
The thought was small—its issue great ;
 A watch-fire on the hill,
It sheds its radiance far adown,
 And cheers the valley still.
A nameless man, amid a crowd
 That throng the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love
 Unstudied from the heart ;
A whisper on the tumult thrown—
 A transitory breath,
It raised a brother from the dust,
 It saved a soul from death.
O germ ! O fount, O word of love,
 O thought at random cast ;
Ye were but little at the first,
 But mighty at the last.

C. MACKAY.



THE CATERPILLAR.

MY little maiden of four years old,
(No myth, but a genuine child is she,
With her bronze-brown eyes, and her curls of
gold)
Came, quite in disgust, one day, to me.

Rubbing her shoulder with rosy palm,
As the loathsome touch seemed yet to thrill her,
She cried, "Oh, mother, I found on my arm
A horrible, crawling caterpillar!"

And with mischievous smile she could scarcely smother,
Yet a glance, in its daring, half-awed and shy,
She added, "While they were about it, mother,
I wish they'd just finished the butterfly!"

They were words to the thought of the soul that turns
From the coarser form of a partial growth,
Reproaching the infinite patience that yearns
With an unknown glory to crown them both.

Ah, look thou largely, with lenient eyes,
On what so beside thee may creep and cling,
For the possible beauty that underlies
The passing phase of the meanest thing !

What if God's great angels, whose waiting love
Beholdeth our pitiful life below,
From the holy height of their heaven above,
Couldn't bear with the worm till the wings should
grow ?

—*Atlantic Monthly.*



CHRISTMAS BELLS.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds ;
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave :
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous as the gale comes on !
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where memory slept.

COWPER.



“WHEN STARS ARE IN THE QUIET SKIES.”



WHEN stars are in the quiet skies,
Then most I pine for thee;
Bend on me then thy tender eyes,
As stars look on the sea.
For thoughts, like waves that glide by night,
Are stillest when they shine,—
Mine earthly love lies hushed in light
Beneath the heaven of thine.

There is an hour when angels keep
Familiar watch o'er men,
When coarser souls are wrapt in sleep—
Sweet spirit, meet me then.
There is an hour when holy dreams
Through slumber fairest glide,
And in that mystic hour it seems
Thou shouldst be by my side.

When Stars are in the quiet Skies. 49

The thoughts of thee too sacred are
For daylight's common beam ;
I can but know thee as my star,
My angel and my dream !
When stars are in the quiet skies,
Then most I pine for thee ;
Bend on me then thy tender eyes,
As stars look on the sea.

E. L. BULWER.



TREES.

No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,
And of a wannish gray ; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash, far stretching his umbrageous arm ;
Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak :
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours ; nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet
Has changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.

COWPER.



WINTER.



WINTER, ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks

Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way,—
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
And dreaded as thou art: Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,

Fireside enjoyment, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening, know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates :
No powdered pert, proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings ; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while heedless of the sound.

COWPER.



ALL FLESH IS GRASS.

ALL flesh is grass, and all its glory fades,
Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind :
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream.
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue ; the only lasting treasure, truth.

COWPER.



THE ORDER OF PROVIDENCE.



F things unseene, how canst thou deeme
aright,”

Then answerèd the righteous Artegall—
“Sith thou misdeem’st so much of things in sight?”
What though the sea with waves continuall
Doe eat the earth, it is no more at all;
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth aught;
For whatsoever from one place doth fall
Is with the tide unto another brought;
For there is nothing lost that may be found if sought.

Likewise the earth is not augmented more
By all that dying into it doe fade,
For of the earth they formèd were of yore;
However gay their blossome or their blade
Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade:
What wrong then is it if that when they die
They turne to that whereof they first were made?
All in the powre of their great Maker lie;
All creatures must obey the voice of the Most High.

They live, they die, like as He doth ordaine,
Ne ever any asketh reason why :
The hils doe not the lowly dales disdaine ;
The dales doe not the lofty hils envy :
He maketh kings to sit in sovereinty ;
He maketh subjects to their powre obey ;
He pulleth downe, he setteth up on high ;
He gives to this, from that He takes away ;
For all we have is His : what He list doe, He may.

Whatever thing is done, by Him is done,
Ne any may his mighty will withstand ;
Ne any may his sovereigne power shun,
Ne loose that He hath bound with steadfast band.
In vaine therefore dost thou now take in hand
To call to count, or weigh His workes anew,
Whose counsel's depth thou canst not understand,
Sith of things subject to thy daily view
Thou dost not know the causes nor their courses dew.

For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the winde that under heaven doth blow ;
Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise,
Or weigh the thought that from man's mind doth
flow :

But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall :

For how can'st thou those greater secrets know,
That dost not know the least thing of them all ?
Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small.

SPENSER.



“PICCIOLA.”

IT was a sergeant old and gray,
Well singed and bronzed from siege and pillage,
Went tramping in an army's wake,
Along the turnpike to the village.

For days and nights the winding host
Had through the little place been marching,
And ever loud the rustics cheered
Till every throat was hoarse and parching.

They only saw a gallant show
Of heroes stalwart under banners,
And in the fierce heroic glow
’Twas theirs to yield but wild hosannas.

The sergeant heard the shrill hurrahs,
Where he behind in step was keeping ;
But glancing down beside the road
He saw a little maid sit weeping.

“ And how is this ?” he gruffly said,
A moment pausing to regard her :
“ Why weepest thou, my little chit ?”
And then she only cried the harder.

“ And how is this, my little chit,”
The sturdy trooper straight repeated,
“ When all the village cheers us on,
That you, in tears, apart are seated ?

“ We march two hundred thousand strong !
And that’s a sight, my baby beauty,
To quicken silence into song,
And glorify the soldier’s duty.”

“ It’s very, very grand, I know,”
The little maid gave soft replying ;
“ And father, mother, brother, too,
All say ‘ hurrah ’ while I am crying.

“ But think—O, Mr. Soldier, think,
How many little sisters’ brothers
Are going all away to fight,
Who may be *killed*, as well as others !”

“ Why, bless thee, child,” the sergeant said,
His brawny hand her curls caressing,
“ ’Tis left for little ones like you
To find that war’s not all a blessing.”

And still the ringing shouts went up
From doorway, thatch, and fields of tillage :
The pall behind the standard seen
By one alone, of all the village.

The oak and cedar bend and writhe
When roars the wind through gap and braken ;
But 'tis the tenderest reed of all
That trembles first when earth is shaken.

ROBERT NEWELL.



A HOLLY LEAF.

SOME high or humble enterprise of good
Contemplate till it shall possess thy mind,
Become thy study, pastime, rest, and food,
And kindle in thy heart a flame refined ;
Pray heaven with firmness thy whole soul to bind
To this thy purpose—to begin, pursue
With thoughts all fixed, and feelings purely kind,
Strength to complete, and with delight review,
And grace to give the praise where all is ever due.



THE ADVENT.

HARK ! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers ,
Prepare the way ! A God, a God appears !
A God ! a God ! the vocal hills reply,
The rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity.
Lo, earth receives him from the bending skies !
Sink down, ye mountains, and, ye valleys, rise ;
With heads declined, ye cedars, homage pay ;
Be smooth, ye rocks ; ye rapid floods, give way !
The Saviour comes, by ancient bards foretold.
Hear Him, ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold !
He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eyeball pour the day ;
'Tis He the obstructed path of sound shall clear,
And bid new music charm the unfolding ear ;
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.
No sigh, no murmur the wide world shall hear ;
From every face He wipes off every tear.

* * * * *

As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
Seeks freshest pasture, and the purest air,

Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects;
The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms;
Thus shall mankind His guardian care engage,
The promised Father of the future age

POPE.



FREEDOM.

"In a service which Thy love appoints,
There are no bonds for me;
For my secret heart is taught the truth,
That makes Thy children free;
That a life of self-renouncing love,
Is a life of liberty."



For what is Freedom—rightly understood?
The universal licence to be good.

H. COLERIDGE.





GOOD WILL TO MEN.

LOVEST thou God as thou oughtest, then lovest
thou likewise thy brethren,
One is the sun in heaven ; and one, only one, is
Love also.

Bears not each human figure the godlike stamp on his
forehead? •

Readest thou not on his face thine origin? Is he not
sailing,

Lost like thyself, on an ocean unknown, and is he not
guided

By the same stars that guide thee?

Think of thy brother no ill, but throw a veil over his
failings ;

Guide thou the erring aright ; for the good, the heavenly
Shepherd

Took the lost lamb in His arms and bore it back to its
mother.

This is the fruit of love, and it is by its fruits that we
know it.

TEGNER.

Translated by Longfellow.

LIFE.

TELL me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream !
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! Life is earnest !
And the grave is not its goal.
Dust thou art, to dust returneth,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way,
But—to act, that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day.

LONGFELLOW.

**THANKFULNESS.**

WHEN thou hast thanked thy God for every blessing
sent,

What time will then remain for murmurs or lament ?

TRENCH.



SLEEP.



F all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep—
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this—
“He giveth His beloved, sleep?”

What would we give to *our* beloved?
The hero's heart, to be unmoved—
The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep—
The senate's shout for patriot vows—
The monarch's crown to light the brows?
“He giveth His beloved. sleep.”

What do we give to *our* beloved?
A little faith, not all unproved—
A little dust, to overweep—
And bitter memories, to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake?
“He giveth His beloved, sleep.”

Sleep soft, beloved ! we sometimes say,
But have no power to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep :
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber, when
" He giveth His beloved, sleep."

O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men, with wailing in your voices !
O delved gold, the wailers heap !
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !
God makes a silence through you all,
And " giveth His beloved, sleep."

His dews drop mutely on the hill ;
His cloud above it, saileth still,
Though on its slope men toil and reap !
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
" He giveth His beloved, sleep."

Yea ! men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man
Sufficient such a rest to keep ;
But angels say—and through the word
The motion of their smile is heard—
" He giveth His beloved, sleep."

For me, my heart,—that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
Seeing through tears the juggler leap—
Would fain its wearied vision close,
And childlike on His love repose,
Who “giveth His beloved, sleep.”

And friends!—dear friends,—when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,—
When round my bier ye come to weep;
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, “Not a tear must o’er her fall—
“He giveth his beloved, sleep.”

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.



HIPS AND HAWS.

WHEN the summer flow'rs have perished,
And the autumn leaves are dead,
On the rose-bush and the hawthorn
Shine berries—glittering red.

They are gems of early winter,
Corals worn on Nature's brow,
When she dons her fleecy mantle
Of pure unsullied snow.

For God deigns the gift of beauty
To December's darkest gloom,
And lays a jewell'd coronet
Upon the flowerets' tomb.

L. V.



LOVE OF NATURE.

WELL I remember, in my boyish days,
How deep the feeling, when my eye look'd forth
On Nature in her loveliness and storms;
How my heart gladdened as the light of Spring
Came from the sun with zephyrs and with showers,
Waking the earth to beauty, and the woods
To music, and the atmosphere to blow
Sweetly and calmly with its breath of balm.

J. G. PERCIVAL.







CONTENTMENT.



OME murmur when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue :
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied :
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How love has in their aid
(Love that not ever seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.

R. C. TRENCH.

SAD AND SWEET.

SAD is our youth, for it is ever going,
Crumbling away beneath our very feet :
Sad is our life, for it is ever flowing
In current unperceived, because so fleet :
Sad are our hopes, for they were sweet in sowing,
But tares self-sown have overtopped the wheat :
Sad are our joys, for they were sweet in blowing—
And still, O still their dying breath is sweet—
And sweet is youth, although it hath bereft us
Of that which made our childhood sweeter still :
And sweet is middle life, for it hath left us
A newer good to cure an older ill :
And sweet are all things, when we learn to prize them
Not for their sake but His, who grants them, or denies
them!

AUBREY DE VERE.

SAINTFOIN.

WHAT have the Pilgrims told
About this flower?
Said they, when in times of old
The Infant in the manger lay,
Thou thy blossoms didst display,
And changed His humble birthplace to a bower.

ALFRED L. HUXFORD.



MY CHILDHOOD'S TUNE.

AND hast thou found my soul again,
Though many a shadowy year hath past
Across its chequered path since when
I heard thy low notes last?

They come with the old pleasant sound,
Long silent, but remembered soon—
With all the fresh green memories wound
About my childhood's tune!

I left thee far among the flowers
My hand shall seek as wealth no more—
The lost sight of those morning hours
No sunrise can restore.

And life hath many an early cloud
That darkens as it nears the noon—
But all their broken rainbows crowd
Back with my childhood's tune!

Thou hast the whisper of young leaves
That told my heart of spring begun,
The bird's song by our hamlet eaves,
Poured to the setting sun—

And voices heard, how long ago,
By winter's hearth or autumn's moon!—
They have grown old and altered now—
All but my childhood's tune!

At our last meeting, Time had much
To teach, and I to learn; for then
Mine was a trusting wisdom—such
As will not come again.

I had not seen life's harvest fade
Before me in the days of June;
But thou—how hath the spring-time stayed
With thee, my childhood's tune!

I had not learned that love, which seemed
So priceless, might be poor and cold;
Nor found whom once I angels deemed
Of coarse and common mould.

I knew not that the world's hard gold
Could far outweigh the heart's best boon;
And yet thou speakest as of old—
My childhood's pleasant tune.

I greet thee as the dove that crossed
My path among Time's breaking waves,
With olive leaves of memory lost,
Or shed, perchance, on graves.

The tree hath grown up wild and rank,
With blighted boughs that time may prune—
But blessed were the dews it drank
From thee—my childhood's tune!

Where rose the stranger city's hum,
By many a princely mart and dome,
Thou comest—even as voices come
To hearts that have no home.

A simple strain to other ears,
And lost amid the tumult soon ;
But dreams of love, and truth, and tears,
Come with my childhood's tune !

FRANCES BROWN.





THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

AND is there care in Heaven, and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?

There is,—else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But, O the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,

And all His workes with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels He sends to and fro
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,

To come to succour us that succour want;

How oft do they with golden pinions cleave

The fitting skyes, like flying pursuivant,

Against fowle feedes to aid us militant:

They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,

And their bright squadrons round about us plant,

And all for love, and nothing for reward:

Owhy should heavenly God to man have such regard!

SPENSER.



THE ELIXIR.

TEACH me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see ;
And ~~what~~ I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee :

Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into an action :
But still to make Thee prepossess,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.

All may of Thee partake.
Nothing can be so mean,
Which, with this tincture,—FOR THY SAKE,
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant, with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that, and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

GEORGE HERBERT.

SOLITUDE.

LEAVE—if thou wouldst be lonely,
Leave nature for the crowd;
Seek there for one—one only
With kindred mind endow'd.
There—as with Nature erst
Closely thou wouldst commune—
The deep soul music, nursed
In either heart, attune.
Heart-wearied, thou wilt own,
Vainly that phantom woo'd,
That thou at last hast known
What is true solitude!

C. F. HOFFMAN.

CIRCLE OF LOVE.

"As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake—
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads,
Friend, parent, neighbour, first will love embrace,
His country next, and next all human race."

POPE.

PURITY.

THE single eye alone can see
All truths around us thrown,
In their eternal unity;
The humble ear alone
Has room to hold and time to prize
The sweetness of life's harmonies.

AUBREY DE VERE.

TIME.

O, THOU great Movement of the universe,
Or change, or flight of Time—for ye are one—
That bearest silently morn, noon, and eve
Into night's shadow and the streaming rays
Of starlight! whither art thou bearing me?
I feel the mighty current sweep me on—
Yet know not whither!

W. C. BRYANT.




PEACE.

MY soul, there is a ~~country~~
Far beyond the stars,
Where ~~stands~~ a winged sentry,
All skilful in the wars:
There above ~~noise and danger~~,
Sweet peace sits crowned with smiles;
And One born in a manger,
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy generous friend,
And (O my soul, awake !)
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave, then, thy foolish ranges;
For none can thee secure,
But One who never changes—
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

H. VAUGHAN.



THE PAST.

VE'S gold and crimson pinions glow
Against the western sky ;
And down the vale, soft fold on fold,
Her misty garments lie.
Down in the dell the night winds wake
And cradle the leaves to sleep ;
And I hear, in spirit, the swell of waves ;
As the shadows round me creep.
'Tis the voice of the waters, that day by day,
Carry my beautiful things away,
And garner them up with the treasures vast
That lie 'neath the waves of the mystic past.

All lovely things that once were mine
Shine up through that solemn sea ;
The hopes of my youth all unfulfilled
Regretfully look at me.
The wan sweet faces of loved ones gone
Smile out from the coral bowers,
And the skeleton forms of friendships dead
Gleam white 'mid the seaweed flowers.

The waters draw nearer, around my feet
The sullen surges swell and beat—
They follow me fast from day to day,
And snatch my beautiful things away.

Hours that glided too quickly by,
Hopes that too soon were past,
Smiles that brightened my life's springtime,
That were all too fair to last ;
Transfigured they gleam 'mid the golden sands
Of that wondrous pavement floor ;
And the voices I loved in the days bygone
Blend with the ocean's roar ;—
The roar of the ocean that day by day
Carries my beautiful things away,
And garners them up with the treasures vast
That lie 'neath the waves of the mystic past.

MRS. CHAPMAN.





TIME.

GOD'S sand-glass has been shaken.—Lo ! there falls
Upon the distressed, upturned brow of Earth,
Another of the year-grains. It is thus
Time's sands increase—how imperceptibly !—
Grain upon grain—till with their desert arms
They gather in the empires; and enclose,
In their long desolate wastes, all that is grand
And beautiful—all cities where the kings
Build for renown ; for Time must—weary thought !—
Ever destroy—vain man must ever build.

As traversing a Libyan waste, the stream,
Nursed in the secret caverns of far hills,
Sinks by degrees into the hungry sands,
Till from the traveller's sight it disappears ;
So in Time's hungrier Saharas sink
The streams of human life—they disappear
Even while we gaze upon them. Are they lost
Irrevocably in the aridness
Of the increasing ages ? Nay ! for lo,
With weary feet emerging from the sand,

The traveller, joy-inspired beneath the cool
Of roofing palms, descries the plenteous spring,
And knows it is the river he had lost,
There, in that Eden of the wilderness,
Strangely restored. Upon the odorous grass
Seated, he muses on that river far
Away for ever sinking—on that spring—
Its purer life—for ever rising near!
'We are that river—we will be that spring,'
He cries: 'life in the desert of the world
May disappear, but in fair garden bowers
Familiar to the tread of angel-feet
Celestial watchers view it welling up
In purity, cleansed by Death's filtering.'

J. BOAG.

DEAD VIOLETS.

As harmless violets, which give
Their virtues here
For salves and syrups, while they live,
Do after calmly disappear,
And neither grieve, repine, nor fear:
So die His servants—and as sure
Shall they revive:
Then let not dust your eyes obscure,
But lift them up, where still alive,
Though fled from you, their spirits hive.

H. VAUGHAN.



THE CHURCH WINDOW.

THE minster window, richly glowing
With many a gorgeous stain and die,
Itself a parable is showing
The might, the power of Poesy.

Look on it from the open square,
And it is only dark and dreary ;
Yon blockhead views it always there,
And vows its aspect makes him weary.

But enter once the holy portal—
What splendour bursts upon the eye !
There symbols, deeds, and forms immortal
Are blazing forth in majesty.

Be thankful, you who have the gift
To read and feel each sacred story :
And oh ! be reverent when you lift
Your eyes to look on heavenly glory !
GOETHE.



WRITTEN ON LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE.

TO make earth's pinnacles His stepping-stones,
Blest by Jehovah are her mountain crests ;
He whom an awful Majesty enthrones,
There flies—descends—or rests.

Sinai, Olympus, still preserve His trace—
And startled Horeb bowed down as He stepped ;
Thor heard His voice, Gilboa saw His face,
His death Golgotha wept.

To Hebron known, adored by Cedar's peak
Of old, Thy glory here Thou didst declare ;
Thee on the loftiest mountain-heights we seek—
Lord ! answer, art Thou there ?

Ye peaceful dwellers in these blessed retreats,
As at the base, from whence rose Israel's cry,
In the night's stillness, from your lofty seats
Hear ye not aught on high ?

Written on La Grande Chartreuse. 101

Is it not yours to see the heavenly throng
Upon the venerable tops descend ?
Is it not yours to hear the angelic song
With mountain echoes blend ?

What ! must the soul in vain implore and sigh ?
Is there 'twixt heaven and us an iron chain ?
Your eyes upraised for ever to the sky—
Are they upraised in vain ?

Forward to rush, obedient to their King,
The stars in sapphire chariots roll on high.
To rise towards Thee the eagle has his wing,
And man has but a sigh !

The good man's prayer to Thee ascending near ;
'The good man's prayer an incense ever Thine ;
But for us, sinners, we have but a tear
'To shed upon Thy shrine.

LAMARTINE.





TWILIGHT.

WHEN the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away ;
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower,
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes,
While nature makes that melancholy pause—
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime?
Who hath not shared that calm so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but weep,
A holy concord, and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow, but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness, but full and clear,
A sweet dejection, a transparent tear,
Unmix'd with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame—and secret without pain.

BYRON.



THE CELESTIAL ARMY.



STOOD by the open casement,
And looked upon the night,
And saw the westward-going stars
Pass slowly out of sight.

Slowly the bright procession
Went down the gleaming arch,
And my soul discerned the music
Of their long triumphal march ;

Till the great celestial army,
Stretching far beyond the poles,
Became the eternal symbol
Of the mighty march of souls.

Onward, for ever onward,
Red Mars led down his clan,
And the moon, like a mailed maiden,
Was riding in the van.

And some were bright in beauty,
And some were faint and small ;
But these might be in their greatest height
The noblest of them all.

Downward, for ever downward,
Behind earth's dusky shore,
They passed into the unknown night,—
They passed, and were no more.

No more ? Oh, say not so !
And downward is not just ;
For the sight is weak, and the sense is dim
That looks through heated dust.

The stars and the mailed moon,
Though they seem to fall and die,
Still sweep with their embattled lines
An endless reach of sky ;

And though the hills of death
May hide the bright array,
The marshalled brotherhood of souls
Still keeps its upward way.

Upward, for ever upward,
I see their march sublime,
And hear the glorious music
Of the conquerors of time.

And long let me remember
That the palest, faintest one,
May to diviner vision be
A bright and blessed sun.

T. B. READ.


AFFLICTIONS.

COUNT each affliction, whether light or grave,
God's messenger sent down to thee. Do thou
With courtesy receive him : rise and bow :
And, ere his shadow pass thy threshold, crave
Permission first his heavenly feet to lave ;
Then lay before him all thou hast. Allow
No cloud of passion to usurp thy brow,
Or mar thy hospitality, no wave
Of mortal tumult to obliterate
Thy soul's marmoreal calmness. Grief should be
Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate,
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free :
Strong to consume small troubles ; to commend
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the
end.

AUBREY DE VERE.



LONG AGO !

 H Life ! thou wert so fair—so fair !
Long ago !
Sweet Happiness was always there,
And Sorrow's visits, they were rare,
Long ago !
The sunshine was so bright—so bright !
Long ago !
Each day, each hour brought fresh delight :
The harvest-moon shone every night,
Long ago !
And, oh ! the music that we had
Long ago !
Such music ! making echo glad,
For what we sang was seldom sad,
Long ago !
The trees were always green—so green !
Long ago !
Decay and frost were never seen,
For summer was a glorious queen,
Long ago !

The roses were so red—so red !

Long ago !

And, oh ! the rich perfume they shed !

It lingers still, though they are dead

Long ago !

—*From Events of the Month.*



‘THE FLOWERS’ STORY.

THE flowers will tell to thee a sacred, mystic story ;
How mouldered earthly dust can wear celestial glory.
On thousand mystic stems is found the love inscription
graven :

“ How beautiful is earth, when it can image heaven !”

HERDER.



FROM THE ARABIC.



OW many winters o'er thy head
Have past !—yet bald it does not show.

Thy branches are not bare—and yet
What storms have shook them to and fro !

To thee has Time brought many joys,
If many it has bid to go ;

And seasoned has with bitterness
Thy cup, that flat it should not grow.

Trust in that veiled Hand, which leads
None by the path that he would go ;

And always be for change prepared,
For the world's law is ebb and flow.

Stand fast in suffering, until He
Who called it, shall dismiss also ;

And from the Lord all good expect,
Who many mercies strews below,

Who in life's narrow garden-strip
Has bid delights unnumbered blow.

—*Elegiac Poems.*



SLEEP.

SLEEP, downy sleep ! come, close my eyes,
Tired with beholding vanities :
Sweet slumbers, come and chase away
The toils and follies of the day ;
On your soft bosom will I lie,
Forget the world, and learn to die.
O Israel's watchful Shepherd ! spread
Tents of angels round my bed ;
Let not the spirits of the air
While I slumber me ensnare ;
But save thy suppliant free from harms,
Clasped in thine everlasting arms.
Clouds and thick darkness are thy throne,
'Thy wonderful pavilion ;
O dart from thence a shining ray,
And then my midnight shall be day.
Thus when the morn, in crimson drest,
Breaks through the windows of the east,
My hymns of thankful praise shall rise
Like incense at the morning sacrifice.

FLATMAN.



PARADISE—IN A DREAM.



ONCE in a dream I saw the flowers
That bud and bloom in Paradise;
More fair they are than waking eyes
Have seen in all this world of ours.
And faint the perfume-bearing rose,
And faint the lily on its stem,
And faint the perfect violet,
Compared with them.

* * * * *

I saw the gate called Beautiful ;
And looked, but scarce could look, within ;
I saw the golden streets begin,
And outskirts of the glassy pool.
Oh harps, oh crowns of plenteous stars,
Oh green palm-branches, many-leaved—
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
Nor heart conceived.

I hope to see these things again,
But not as once in dreams by night;
To see them with my very sight,
And touch, and handle, and attain :
To have all Heaven beneath my feet
For narrow way that once they trod ;
To have my part with all the saints,
And with my God.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

IN SICKNESS.

WHAT though my harp and viol be
Both hung upon the willow-tree?
What though my bed be now my grave,
And for my house I darkness have?
What though my healthful days are fled,
And I lie numbered with the dead?
Yet I have hope, by Thy great power,
To spring—though now a withered flower.

HERRICK.





“REJOICE EVERMORE.”

BUT how should we be glad ?
We that are journeying through a vale of tears,
Encompast with a thousand woes and fears,
How should we not be sad ?

Angels that ever stand
Within the presence-chamber, and there raise
The never interrupted hymn of praise,
May welcome this command.

Or they whose strife is o'er,
Who all their weary length of life have trod,
As pillars now within the temple of God,
That shall go out no more.

But we who wander here,
We that are exiled in this gloomy place,
Still doomed to water earth's unthankful face
With many a bitter tear—

Bid us lament and mourn,
Bid us that we go mourning all the day,
And we will find it easy to obey,
Of our best things forlorn ;

But not that we be glad ;
If it be true the mourners are the blest,
O leave us in a world of sin, unrest,
And trouble,—to be sad.

I spake, and thought to weep,
For sin and sorrow, suffering and crime,
That filled the world, all mine appointed time
A settled grief to keep.

When lo ! as day from night,
As day from out the womb of night forlorn,
So from that sorrow was that gladness born,
Even in mine own despite.

Yet was not that by this
Excluded, at the coming of that joy
Fled not that grief, nor did that grief destroy
The newly-risen bliss :

But side by side they flow,
Two fountains flowing from one smitten heart,
And oft-times scarcely to be known apart—
That gladness and that woe ;

Two fountains from one source,
Or which from two such neighbouring sources run,
That aye for him who shall unseal the one,
The other flows perforce.

And both are sweet and calm,
Fair flowers upon the banks of either blow,
Both fertilize the soil, and where they flow
Shed round them holy balm.

R. C. TRENCH.

From Hymns and Poems.



WINTER.

In rich men's halls the fire is piled,
And ermined robes keep out the weather;
In poor men's huts the fire is low—
Through broken panes the keen winds blow,
And old and young are cold together.
Oh ! poverty is disconsolate !
Its pains are many, its foes are strong ;
The rich man in his jovial cheer,
Wishes 'twas winter through the year ;
The poor man, 'mid his wants profound,
With all his little children round,
Prays God the winter be not long !

MARY HOWITT.



LINES ON MEMORY.



STAND on the brink of the river,
The river of life to me,
Where the billows of memory quiver,
And rise and fall like the sea.
I read in their tremulous motion,
The records of many a year,
And like voices that come from the ocean,
Are the muffled words I hear.
Down under the waters gleaming,
There are visions of long ago,
There are forms of beauty beaming,
There are shadows dark and low.
There are scenes from life's fair morning,
That come like the break of day,
O'er a beautiful landscape dawning,
When the mists have cleared away.
I see the chain of friendship
Death never had power to part,
One link is under the water,
The other is round my heart.

The Holly and Mistletoe:

I hear from the depths of the river,
Sweet words that my spirit thrill,
We are parted, but not for ever,
We are living and loving still.
And my heart no more is lonely,
Nor shrinks with a sense of pain,
For the loved who were once mine only,
I know shall be mine again.
Dark clouds may close o'er the vision,
Storms drive me away from the shore,
But hope, like the lamp of a vessel,
Goes out in my soul no more.

Flow on, mysterious river,
Flow on to Eternity's sea.
By Faith and a holy endeavour
The future hath joy for me.





ON THE SHORES OF TENNESSEE.

NOVE my arm-chair, faithful Pompey,
In the sunshine bright and strong,
For this world is fading, Pompey—
Massa won't be with you long ;
And I fain would hear the south wind
Bring once more the sound to me
Of the wavelets, softly breaking
On the shores of Tennessee.

“ Mournful though the ripples murmur,
As they still the story tell,
How no vessels float the banner
That I've loved so long and well,
I shall listen to their music,
Dreaming that again I see
Stars and stripes, on sloop and shallop,
Sailing up the Tennessee.

“ And, Pompey, while old Massa's waiting
For death's last despatch to come,
If that exiled starry banner
Should come proudly sailing home,

You shall greet it, slave no longer—
Voice and hand shall both be free,
That shout and point to Union colours,
On the waves of Tennessee.”

“ Massa’s berry kind to Pompey ;
But ole darry’s happy here,
Where he’s tended corn and cotton,
For ’ese many a long-gone year.
Over yonder Missis’ sleeping—
No one tends her grave like me ;
Mebbie she would miss the flowers
She used to love in Tennessee.

“ ’Pears like she was watching Massa—
If Pompey should beside him stay,
Mebbie she’d remember better
How for him she used to pray ;
Telling him that ’way up yonder
White as snow his soul would be,
If he served the Lord of heaven
While he lived in Tennessee.”

Silently the tears were rolling
Down the poor old dusky face,
As he stepped behind his master,
In his long accustomed place.

Then a silence fell around them,
As they gazed on rock and tree
Pictured in the placid waters
Of the rolling Tennessee.

Master dreaming of the battle
Where he fought by Marion's side,
When he bade the haughty Tarlton
Stoop his lordly crest of pride :
Man remembering how yon sleeper
Once he held upon his knee,
Ere she loved the gallant soldier,
Ralph Vervair of Tennessee.

Still the south wind fondly lingers
'Mid the veteran's silvery hair ;
Still the bondman close beside him
Stands behind the old arm-chair.
With his dark-hued hand uplifted,
Shading eyes he bends to see
Where the woodland boldly jutting
Turns aside the Tennessee.

Thus he watches cloud-born shadows
Glide from tree to mountain crest,
Softly creeping, aye and ever,
To the river's yielding breast.

Ha ! above the foliage yonder
Something flutters wild and free !
“ Massa ! Massa ! Hallelujah !
The flag’s come back to Tennessee ! ”

“ Pompey, hold me on your shoulder,
Help me stand on foot once more,
That I may salute the colours
As they pass my cabin-door.
Here’s the paper signed that frees you,
Give a freeman’s shout with me—
‘ God and Union ’ be our watchword
Evermore in Tennessee.”

Then the trembling voice grew fainter,
And the limbs refused to stand ;
One prayer to Jesus—and the soldier
Glided to the better land.
When the flag went down the river
Man and master both were free,
While the ringdove’s note was mingled
With the rippling Tennessee.

By an American Poet.





HOPE AND DESPAIR.



NE time I was allowed to steer
Through realms of azure light;—
Henceforth, I said, I need not fear
A lower, meaner flight :
But here shall evermore abide,
In light and splendour glorified.

My heart one time the rivers fed,
Large dews upon it lay ;
A freshness it has won, I said,
Which shall not pass away,
But what it is, it shall remain,
Its freshness to the end retain.

But when I lay upon the shore,
Like some poor wounded thing,
I deemed I should not ever more
Refit my shattered wing—
Nailed to the ground and fastened there :
This was the thought of my despair.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

And when my very heart seemed dried,
And parched as summer dust,
Such still I deemed it must abide ;
No hope had I, no trust
That any power again could bless
With fountains that waste wilderness.

But if both hope and fear were vain,
And came alike to nought,
Two lessons we from this may gain,
If aught *can* teach us aught—
One lesson, rather—to divide
Between our fearlessness and pride.

R. C. TRENCH.





HOLLY LEAVES.



WHIRL blast from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound ;
Then all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.
Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green ;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop ;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air,
Yet here and there, and everywhere
Along the floor, along the shade
By those embowering hollies made
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Goodfellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee
Were dancing to his minstrelsy.

WORDSWORTH.

SUPERSTITIONS OF FERNS (MOONWORTS).

THERE is a herb, some say, whose virtue's such,
It in the pasture, only with a touch,
Unshods the new-shod steed.

WITHERS.

"BUT on St. John's mysterious night,
Sacred to many a wizard spell,
The time when first to human sight
Confest the mystic fern-seed fell:
Beside the sloe's black knotted thorn
What hour the Baptist stem was born—
That hour when heaven's breath is still—
I'll seek the shaggy fern-clad hill,
Where time has delved a dreary dell,
Befitting best a hermit's cell;
And watch, 'mid murmurs muttering stern,
The seed departing from the fern,
Ere wakeful demons can convey
The wonder-working charm away,
And tempt the blows from arm unseen,
Should thoughts unholy intervene."

I HAD

No medicine,* sir, to go invisible—
No fern-seed in my pocket.

BEN JONSON.

* Supposed to render the wearer invisible.



HIDDEN TREASURES.



ILGRIM on life's toilsome journey,
Searching for the good and true,
Be thou not in haste to turn thee
From what first offends thy view.

In the most unheard-of places,
Richest treasure thou mayst find ;
Forms that never knew the graces,
Have the loftiest souls enshrined.

Gems of price are deeply hidden,
'Neath the rugged rocks concealed ;
What would ne'er come forth unbidden,
To thy search may be revealed.

While the fading flowers of pleasure
Spring spontaneous from the soil,
Thou wilt find the harvest's treasure
Yields alone to patient toil !

The Holly and Mistletoe.

Of thy trial ne'er grow weary ;
Child-like seek from all to learn ;
And in after years to cheer thee,
Thou wilt reap a rich return.

And it is a thought endearing,
That our labours day by day,
Are the rugged pathway clearing
For those following on the way.

Pilgrim on life's toilsome journey,
Searching for the good and true,
Be thou not in haste to turn thee
From what first offends thy view.

J. HAGAN.





THE MERRY HEART.



WOULD not from the wise require
The lumber of their learnèd lore ;
Nor would I from the rich desire
A single counter from their store ;
For I have ease and I have health,
And I have spirits light as air ;
And more than wisdom, more than wealth,
A merry heart that laughs at care.

Like other mortals of my kind
I've struggled for dame Fortune's favour,
And sometimes have been half inclined
To rate her for her ill-behaviour.
But life is short! I thought it folly
To lose its moments in despair,
So slipp'd aside from melancholy
With merry heart that laughed at care.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

So now from idle wishes clear
I make the good I may not find;
Adown the stream I gently steer,
And shift my sail with every wind.
And half by nature, half by reason,
Can still with pliant heart prepare
The mind attuned to every season,
The merry heart that laughs at care.

Yet wrap me in your sweetest dream,
Ye social feelings of the mind :
Give, sometimes give, your sunny gleam,
And let the rest good humour find.
Yes ! let me hail and welcome give
To every joy my lot may share ;
And pleased and pleasing let me live
With merry heart that laughs at care.

MILMAN.





ROSE, *Rosa rugosa*, Thunberg.





O YE KEEN BREEZES.



YE keen breezes from the salt Atlantic,
Which to the beach where memory loves to
wander,

On your stray pinions waft reviving coolness !
Bend your course hither !

For in the surf ye scattered to the sunshine,
Did we not sport together in my boyhood,
Screaming for joy amid the flashing breakers,
O rude companions ?

Then to the meadows beautiful and fragrant,
Where the coy spring beholds her earliest verdure
Brighten with smiles that rugged seaside hamlet
How would we hasten !

There, under elm trees affluent in foliage,
High o'er whose summit hovered the sea eagle,
Through the hot glaring noontide have we rested
After our gambols.

Vainly the sailor called you from your slumber ;
Like a glazed pavement shone the level ocean ;
Where, with the snow-white canvas idly drooping,
 Stood the tall vessels.

And when at length exulting ye awakened,
Rushed to the beach and ploughed the liquid acres,
How have I chased you through the shivered billows
 In my frail shallop !

Playmates, old playmates, hear my invocation !
In the close town I waste this golden summer,
Where piercing cries and sounds of wheels in motion
 Ceaselessly mingle.

When shall I feel your breath upon my forehead ?
When shall I hear you in the elm trees' branches ?
When shall we wrestle in the briny surges,
 Friends of my boyhood ?

EPES SARGENT.





THE INEVITABLE.

THE royal sage, Lord of the Magic Ring,
Solomon, once upon a morn in spring,
By Cedron, in his garden's rosiest walk,
Was pacing with a pleasant guest in talk ;
When they beheld, approaching, but with face
Yet undiscerned, a stranger in the place.

How he came there, what wanted, who could be,
How dare, unushered, beard such privacy,
Whether 'twas some great Spirit of the Ring,
And if so, why he thus should daunt the king,
(For the Ring's master, after one sharp gaze,
Stood waiting, more in trouble than amaze ;)
All this the courtier would have asked ; but fear
Palsied his utterance, as the man drew near.

The stranger seemed (to judge him by his dress)
One of mean sort, a dweller with distress,
Or some poor pilgrim ; but the steps he took
Belied it with strange greatness ; and his look
Opened a page in a tremendous book
He wore a cowl, from under which there shone,
Full on the guest, and on the guest alone,

A face, not of this earth, half veiled in gloom
And radiance, but with eyes like lamps of doom,
Which, ever as they came, before them sent
Rebuke and staggering and astonishment,
With sense of change, and worse of change to be,
Sore sighing, and extreme anxiety,
And feebleness, and faintness, and moist brow,
The Past a scoff, the Future crying, "Now!"
All that makes wet the pores, and lifts the hair;
All that makes dying vehemence despair,
Knowing it must be dragged it knows not where.

The excess of fear and anguish, which had tied
The courtier's tongue, now loosed it, and he cried,
"O royal master! Sage! Lord of the Ring,
I cannot bear the horror of this thing;
Help with thy mighty art! Wish me, I pray,
On the remotest mountain of Cathay."

Solomon wished, and the man vanished straight;
Up comes the terror, with his orbs of fate.

"Solomon," with a lofty voice said he,
"How came that man here, wasting time with thee?
I was to fetch him, ere the close of day,
From the remotest mountain of Cathay."
Solomon said, bowing him to the ground,
"Angel of Death, there will the man be found."

LEIGH HUNT.



SONNET.—COUNTRY MUSINGS.

TO one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven ; to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when with heart content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads some debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment,
Returning home at evening with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel : an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by ;
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

KEATS.





HOLLY BOUGH.

I LOVE this glad season as yearly it comes,
With its cold to our meadows, and mirth to our
homes;

I love in the landscape, when whitened with snow,
To mark the bright leaves of the green holly bough.

I love in the merry fresh days of the Spring
To mark the trees budding and hear the birds sing;
But now, while our holiday feelings o'erflow,
How cheerfully bright is the green holly bough.

I love in the warmth of the summer sunned hours
To wander alone in the sweet leafy bowers,
But I love in this season to mingle the glow
Of social delight 'neath the green holly bough.

Then gather it quickly, the berries and spray,
And hang it up high on this festival day;
Let wine, mirth, and music unitedly flow
All soberly under the green holly bough.

ANON.



FLOWERS.

THERE the rose unveils
Her breast of beauty, and each delicate bud
O' the season comes in turn to bloom and perish.

But first of all the violet, with an eye
Blue as the midnight heavens, the frail snowdrop,
Born of the breath of Winter, and on his brow
Fixed like a pale and melancholy star;
The languid hyacinth, and wild primrose,
And daisy trodden down like modesty;
The foxglove, in whose drooping bells the bee
Makes her sweet music; the narcissus (named
From him who died for love), the tangled woodbine,
Lilacs, and flowering limes, and scented thorns,
And some from whom the voluptuous winds of June
Catch their perfumings.

BARRY CORNWALL.



WINTER.

THIS is the eldest of the seasons ; he
Moves not like Spring with gradual steps, nor
grows

From bud to beauty, but, with all his snows,
Comes down at once in hoar antiquity.
No rains nor loud proclaiming tempests flee
Before him, nor unto his time belong
The suns of Summer, nor the charms of song,
That with May's gentle smiles so well agree :
But he, made perfect in his birthday cloud,
Starts into sudden life with scarce a sound,
And with a gentle footstep prints the ground,
As though to cheat man's ear ; yet while he stays
He seems to prompt us to our merriest days,
And bid the dance and joke be long and loud.

BARRY CORNWALL.

FROSTED LEAVES.

THE winter's hoar-frost makes minutest spray
Of bush or hedgerow sparkle to the day
In magnitude and beauty, which bereaved
Of such investment, eye had ne'er perceived.

JOANNA BAILLIE.



PATIENCE.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless (though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide),
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or His own gifts; who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best; His state
Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

MILTON.



MORNING MEDITATIONS IN WINTER.

LET Taylor preach upon a morning breezy,
How well to rise while nights and larks are
flying—

For my part, getting up seems not so easy
By half, as lying !

What if the lark *does* carol in the sky,
Soaring beyond the sight to find him out—
Wherefore am I to rise at such a fly ?
I'm not a trout !

Talk not to me of bees and such like hums,
The smell of sweet herbs at the morning prime—
Only lie long enough, and bed becomes
A bed of time.

To me Dan Phœbus and his car are nought,
His steeds that paw impatiently about ;
Let them enjoy, say I, as horses ought,
The first turn-out !

My stomach is not ruled by other men's,
And, grumbling for a reason, quaintly begs
Wherefore should master rise before the hens
Have laid their eggs?

An early riser Mr. Gray has drawn,
Who used to haste the dewy grass among,
"To meet the sun upon the upland lawn"—
Well—he died young!

With charwomen such early hours agree,
And sweeps that earn betimes their bit and sup;
But I'm no climbing boy, and need not be
"All up—all up!"

So here I'll lie, my morning calls deferring,
Till something nearer to the stroke of noon;
A man that's fond precociously of stirring
Must be a spoon!

THOMAS HOOD.





THE CARELESS WORD.



WORD is ringing through my brain ;
It was not meant to give me pain ;
It had no tone to bid it stay
When other things had passed away ;
It had no meaning more than all
Which in an idle hour fall ;
It was, when *first* the sound I heard,
A lightly-uttered, careless word.

That word, oh ! it doth haunt me now
In scenes of joy, in scenes of woe ;
By night, by day, in sun or shade,
With the half smile that gently play'd
Reproachfully, and gave the sound
Eternal power through life to wound.
There is no voice I ever heard
So deeply fixed as that one word.

When in the laughing crowd some tone,
Like those whose joyous sound is gone,

Strikes on my ear, I shrink, for then
The careless word comes back again.
When all alone I sit and gaze
Upon the cheerful home-fire blaze,
Lo! freshly as when first 'twas heard,
Returns that lightly uttered word.

When dreams bring back the days of old,
With all that wishes could not hold;
And from my feverish couch I start
To press a shadow to my heart—
Amid its beating echoes, clear
That little word I seem to hear;
In vain I say, while it is heard,
Why weep?—'twas but a foolish word!

It comes, and with it come the tears,
The hopes, the joys of former years;
Forgotten smiles, forgotten looks,
Thick as dead leaves on Autumn brooks,
And all as joyless, though they *were*
The brightest things life's springs could share.
Oh! would to God I ne'er had heard
That lightly-uttered, careless word!

It was the first, the only one—
Of those which lips for ever gone
Breathed in their love—which had for me
Rebuke of harshness at my glee;

The Holly and Mistletoe.

And if those lips were heard to say
"Beloved, let it pass away,"
Ah! then perchance—but I have heard
The last dear tone—the careless word!

MRS. NORTON.





OH, PARADISE MUST FAIRER BE.



H, Paradise must fairer be
Than any spot below !
My spirit pines for liberty ;
Now let me thither go.

In Paradise, for ever clear,
The stream of love is flowing ;
For every tear that I've shed here
A pearl therein is glowing.

In Paradise alone is rest ;
Joy-breathing, woe-dispelling ;
A heavenly wind fans every breast
Within that happy dwelling.

For every wounding thorn below
A rose shall blossom there ;
And sweeter flowers than earth can show
Shall twine around my hair.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

And every joy that budding died,
Shall open there in bloom ;
And Spring, in all her flowery pride,
Shall waken from the tomb.

And all the joys shall meet me there
For which my heart is pining,
Like golden fruit, in gardens fair,
And flowers for ever shining.

My youth that fled so soon away,
And left me sad, decaying,
Shall there be with me every day,
With bright wings round me playing.

All hopes, all wishes, all the love
I longed for, tasted never,
Shall bloom around me there above,
And be with me for ever.

From the German of RÜCKERT.





FROM THE HYMN ON THE NATIVITY.

IT was the winter wild,
While the Heav'n-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature in awe to him
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw,
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace ;

She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere
His ready harbinger,

With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around :

The idle spear and shield were high up hung,
The hooked chariot stood,
Unstain'd with hostile blood,

The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng,
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by.

But-peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of light

His reign of peace upon the earth began :
The winds with wonder whist
Smoothly the waters kiss'd,

Whisp'ring new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

The stars with deep amaze
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,

Bending one way their precious influence,

From the Hymn on the Nativity. 147

And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
 Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespoke, and bid them go.

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
 The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
 The new enlighten'd world no more should need;
He saw a greater sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axle-tree could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
 Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
 Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
 As never was by mortal finger strook,

Divinely warbled voice

Answering the stringed noise,

As all their souls in blissful rapture took:

The air such pleasure loth to lose,

With thousand echoes still prolongs each heav'nly close.

MILTON.





REJOICE ALWAYS.



REJOICE in Christ alway—

When earth looks heavenly bright,
When joy makes glad the livelong day,
And peace shuts in the night.
Rejoice, when care and woe
The fainting soul oppress,—
When tears at wakeful midnight flow,
And morn brings heaviness.

Rejoice, when festal boughs,
Our winter walls adorn,
And Christians greet, with hymns and vows,
The Saviour's natal morn.
Rejoice, when mourning weeds
The widowed Church doth wear
In memory of her Lord who bleeds,
While Christians fast to prayer.

Rejoice in hope and fear,—
Rejoice in life and death,—
Rejoice, when threatening storms are near,
And comfort languisheth.

The Holly and Mistletoe.

When should not they rejoice
Whom Christ his brethren calls—
Who hear and know his guiding voice
When on their hearts it falls?

Yet not to rash excess
Let joy like ours prevail;—
Feast not on earth's deliciousness,
Till faith began to fail.
Our temperate use of bliss—
Let it to all appear;
And be our constant watchword this—
"The Lord Himself is near!"

Take anxious care for nought,—
To God your wants make known,
And soar, on wings of heavenly thought,
Toward his eternal throne.
So, though our path is steep,
And many a tempest lours,
Shall his own peace our spirits keep,
And Christ's dear love be ours.

J. MOULTRIE.





• EVENING.

FATHER! by thy love and power
Comes again the evening hour :
Light has vanished, labours cease,
Weary creatures rest in peace.
Thou, whose genial dews distil
On the lowliest weed that grows,
Father! guard our couch from ill,
Lull thy children to repose.
We to Thee ourselves resign,
Let our latest thoughts be thine.

Saviour ! to thy Father bear
This our feeble evening prayer ;
Thou hast seen how oft to-day
We, like sheep, have gone astray :
Worldly thoughts, and thoughts of pride,
Wishes to thy cross untrue,
Secret faults, and undescried,
Meet thy spirit-piercing view,
Blessed Saviour ! yet through Thee
Pray that these may pardoned be.

Holy Spirit ! breath of balm !
Fall on us in evening's calm :
Yet awhile before we sleep,
We, with Thee, will vigils keep ;
Lead us on our sins to muse,
Give us truest penitence,
Then the love of God infuse,
Breathing humble confidence ;
Melt our spirits, mould our will,
Soften, strengthen, comfort still !

Blessed Trinity ! be near
Through the hours of darkness drear ;
When the help of man is far,
Ye more clearly present are :
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Watch o'er our defenceless head,
Let your Angels' guardian host
Keep all evil from our bed,
Till the flood of morning rays
Wake us to a song of praise.

From Hymns and Poems.

